

Luke 1:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

Analysis

He shall be great in the sight of the Lord (μέγας ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου, *megas enōpion tou kyriou*)—John's greatness is defined by divine estimation, not worldly acclaim. The Nazirite vow details follow: **shall drink neither wine nor strong drink** (οἶνον καὶ σίκερα οὐ μὴ πίῃ, *oinon kai sikera ou mē piē*)—total abstinence from fermented beverages, marking consecration to God (Numbers 6:3).

Filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb (πνεύματος ἀγίου πλησθήσεται ἔτι ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, *pneumatos hagiou plēsthēsetai eti ek koilias mētros autou*)—unprecedented prenatal sanctification, recalling Jeremiah's calling (Jeremiah 1:5). John alone among Old Testament saints received the Spirit before birth, preparing him as the final prophet bridging covenants.

Historical Context

Gabriel's annunciation to Zechariah (6 BC) occurred during the priestly division of Abijah's temple service. The Nazirite vow tradition extended back to Samson and Samuel, signifying complete dedication to God's purposes. John's unique prenatal filling anticipated the new covenant outpouring at Pentecost.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does defining greatness 'in the sight of the Lord' rather than human standards challenge modern ambition?
2. What does John's prenatal filling with the Spirit reveal about God's sovereign preparation of His servants?

Interlinear Text

ἔσται	γὰρ	μέγας	ἐνώπιον	τοῦ	κυρίου	καὶ	οἴνου	καὶ
he shall be	For	great	in the sight	G3588	of the Lord	and	wine	and
G2071	G1063	G3173	G1799		G2962	G2532	G3631	G2532
σίκερα	οὐ	μὴ	πίη	καὶ	πνεύματος	ἀγίου		
strong drink	G3756	G3361	shall drink	and	Ghost	with the Holy		
G4608			G4095	G2532	G4151	G40		

πλησθήσεται	ἔτι	ἐκ	κοιλίας	μητρὸς	αὐτοῦ
he shall be filled	even	from	womb	mother's	G846
G4130	G2089	G1537	G2836	G3384	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 1:5 (Holy): Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Acts 2:4 (Holy): And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Ephesians 5:18 (Spirit): And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Galatians 1:15 (Parallel theme): But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

Luke 7:33 (Parallel theme): For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

Joshua 4:14 (References Lord): On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

1 Chronicles 17:8 (Parallel theme): And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth.

Joshua 3:7 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

Psalms 22:9 (Parallel theme): But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

1 Chronicles 29:12 (Parallel theme): Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.